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RR RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHLZ
DE RUEHRL #1416/01 3131241
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 091241Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5713
INFO RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 001416

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin
Wall, CLIMATE, AFGHANISTAN, Health Care Reform;BERLIN

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- [1. Lead Stories](#)

ARD-TV's primetime newscast opened with a story on the celebrations of the fall of the Berlin Wall 20 years ago. Many media carried photos of the giant dominos that will topple along the former path of the Wall. "The wall will fall once again," the caption of Sueddeutsche's front-page photo of the dominos and the Brandenburg Gate remarked. ZDF-TV's primetime newscast opened with a story on Saarland's coalition agreement. All media highlighted that the House of Representatives approved President Obama's health bill. Frankfurter Allgemeine led with the headline: "Obama: Health care reform still this year."

- [2. Fall of the Wall Anniversary](#)

All German media carried lengthy reports on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the wall, highlighting: "20 years of freedom--Berlin celebrates. The capital is commemorating with great festivity the fall of the Wall and the peaceful revolution of 1989. State and government leaders from all around the world are visiting. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are in town," (Berliner Zeitung).

Die Welt led with the headline "November 9: a day that wrote history. In Berlin, state leaders and visitors want to celebrate 'the happiest day in recent German history' (Angela Merkel) together with the Germans." In an editorial, the paper stated: "We celebrate the courage of the people who place freedom above all, risked everything and won everything. The wall did not fall down, it was brought down."

Frankfurter Allgemeine remarked in a front-page editorial that this year's Nobel Peace Prize should have been given to the people who

helped bring about the peaceful revolution in 1989: "Above all, there is one name that pops out: [former Chancellor] Kohl. Among the politicians of the time, he contributed most to the fact that the collapse of a dictatorship and the end of an ideology led straight to the process of Germany's reunification and to that of the whole continent being united in peace and freedom. The miracle of Berlin was followed by the miracle of Europe.... The chain reaction that ran through the Eastern part of the continent led to the fact that Europe's nations can live today in freedom, peace and security."

Sueddeutsche editorialized: "Germans easily tend to forget in their festivities on the fall of the Wall that the year 1989 was not a national event. 1989 was much bigger: The epochal year shook the whole world, probably more than the two world wars with their devastating impact in the first part of the terrible 20th century. November 9, 1989 is a symbolic day for a geopolitical turning point and the beginning of a new world order. With the fall of the Wall, the Eurocentric worldview began to fade, political and economic forces were set free that led to the rapid growth of entire global regions, and accelerated cultural destruction and social change. Europe lost its significance as the axis of politics and the battlefield of ideologies and power claims."

Frankfurter Rundschau commented: "The lesson we should learn from 1989 is to take action on the social and economic realities of today. The people in East Germany stood up to take action without being certain that they could be successful. They would have had more reason to be doubtful than everyone else today who leans back, believing that change is not possible. We would waste the legacy of

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the peaceful transformation of Eastern Europe if we did not translate them into the requirements of our time."

Rheinische Post editorialized: "The iron curtain, the wall, the death strip—they all went right through Germany. Only the fall of the Wall opened a prospect of establishing a new world order that reduced the confrontation and opened up the European Union towards the East. Europe is growing together with breathtaking speed."

13. Climate Copenhagen

Berliner Zeitung carried a critical editorial on Chancellor Merkel's efforts to push for climate protection and the Copenhagen summit: "Doubts have been increasing. It was disappointing to see how rarely Merkel has addressed the issue of her own accord and put it on the political agenda. She was actually more concerned to water down the environmental regulations for European cars and industries to do a favor to the moaning German business world. She could repair this mistake now. The G20 ministerial in Scotland failed to reach an agreement on the emerging countries' contribution to climate protection. This is a particularly bad omen for the Copenhagen summit in four weeks. Only with enormous efforts will a compromise for an international agreement be reached. This is an historically important meeting. However, Merkel is hesitating and wonders whether she should go there at all. By putting everything into it, she could increase the chance of success. If she stays at home, she will have finally gambled away her reputation as climate chancellor."

14. Afghanistan

Sueddeutsche headlined "Reconstruction workers instead of soldiers," adding: "A change has been indicated in America's policy on Afghanistan: Washington pushes for a new civilian coordinator."

Frankfurter Rundschau analyzed Britain's approach: "By exerting additional pressure on Karzai, PM Brown tries to assuage the sentiment at home. Simultaneously, there are considerations to withdraw British soldiers to safer places... Also army personnel are wondering whether such measures could indeed quieten the increasing calls to withdraw troops. Without the support of the people the war could not be successful.... Many British people believe their government leader could get lost in the difficult parts of Afghanistan, just like his predecessor Blair in Iraq."

15. Health Care Reform

Sueddeutsche editorialized: "The tough battle in the House of Representatives indicates how difficult it will still be to implement the reform. The approval by the Senate is anything but certain. A handful of Democrats is opposing the bill in the Senate. They are afraid of their voters.... Failure would inevitably get the Republicans a majority in the Congress again in 2010. Even conservative Democrats cannot want this."

Under the headline "Only a small success for Obama," Berliner Zeitung remarked: "This was not yet the great liberating success for Obama. The paralyzing dispute over the U.S. health care reform is simply going into the next round. The result is unpredictable. By approving the bill in the House of Representatives, Obama's democrats took the bull by the horns. The fear to be left behind with nothing is uniting them right now. Recent election defeats in Virginia and New Jersey demonstrated what would happen if the governing party does not rule.... Obama needs this reform-quickly. Too many problems are on his plate to allow Washington to be paralyzed by the dispute over health care. Unemployment is the highest in 25 years. Other reforms are waiting."

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Under the headline "Miracles have a price tag," Tagesspiegel commented: "It is a success for Barack Obama. A slim majority in the House of Representatives approved a health care reform that is close to his ideal. The health care reform has been on the Democrat's agenda for a very long time. They have never come so far. However, it was a costly and laborious victory. The majority was only achieved after compromises were made that the grassroots consider to be serious: the prohibition to pay for abortion with healthcare funds.... The draft does not have a chance of getting through the Senate unchanged. The second part of the Congress will approve a different version with further significant changes."

MURPHY